

31
CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for electronically signing an electronic transcript, comprising:
 - performing a first hash operation on the electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript;
 - concatenating data to the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript, said data identifying a user;
 - performing a second hash operation on the data concatenated to the representation, the second hash operation generating a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;
 - providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;
 - obtaining a notary record from the digital notary service of the time stamping;
 - digitally signing the notary record; and
 - forming an electronically signed electronic transcript by bundling the digitally signed notary record with the electronic transcript and with the data identifying the user.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the first hash operation is a RIPEMD-160 hash operation.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein said data includes a user name uniquely identifying the user.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said data includes a user number associated with the user.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said data includes a recipient's name.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said data includes a unique identifier which uniquely identifies the transcript.
7. A computer program product comprising:
 - a computer useable medium and computer readable code embodied on said computer useable medium for causing electronically signing an electronic transcript by a user, the computer readable code comprising:
 - computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the performing a first hash operation on the electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript;
 - computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the concatenating data to the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript, said data identifying the user;
 - computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the performing a second hash operation on the data

concatenated to the representation, the second hash operation generating a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the obtaining a notary record from the digital notary service of the time stamping;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the digitally signing the notary record; and

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the forming of an electronically signed transcript by bundling the digitally signed notary record with the electronic transcript and the data identifying the user.

8. A computer data signal embodied in a transmission medium, comprising:

a code segment including instructions for performing a first hash operation on an electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript;

a code segment including instructions for concatenating data to the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript, said data identifying the user;

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a code segment including instructions for providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;

a code segment including instructions for digitally signing the notary record; and

a code segment including instructions for forming an electronically signed electronic transcript including the digitally signed notary record, the electronic transcript, and the data identifying the user.

9. A method for electronically signing an electronic transcript, comprising:

performing a first hash operation on a file containing the electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript;

concatenating data to the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript, said data identifying a user;

performing a second hash operation on the data and the representation,
the second hash operation generating a representation of the contents of the
electronic transcript and the data;

providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;

obtaining a notary record from the digital notary service of the time stamping;

digitally signing the notary record; and

forming an electronically signed electronic transcript by bundling the digitally signed notary record with the data identifying the user and with the file containing the electronic transcript.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the first hash operation is a RIPEMD-160 hash operation.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein said data includes a user name uniquely identifying the user.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein said data includes a user number associated with the user.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein said data includes a recipient's name.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein said data includes a unique identifier which uniquely identifies the transcript.

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15. The method of claim 9, wherein said file contains text of the electronic transcript.

16. The method of claim 9, wherein said file excludes page numbers, line numbers, headers, and footers.

17. A computer program product comprising:

a computer useable medium and computer readable code embodied on said computer useable medium for causing electronically signing an electronic transcript by a user, the computer readable code comprising:

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the performing a first hash operation on a file containing the electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the concatenating data to the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript, said data identifying the user;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the performing a second hash operation on the data concatenated to the representation, the second hash operation generating a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;

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computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the obtaining a notary record from the digital notary service of the time stamping;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the digitally signing the notary record; and

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the forming of an electronically signed transcript by bundling the digitally signed notary record with the data identifying the user and with the file containing the electronic transcript.

18. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the file excludes page numbers, line numbers, headers, and footers.

19. A computer data signal embodied in a transmission medium, comprising:

a code segment including instructions for performing a first hash operation on a file containing an electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript;

a code segment including instructions for concatenating data to the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript, said data identifying the user;

a code segment including instructions for performing a second hash operation on the data concatenated to the representation, the second hash operation generating a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;

a code segment including instructions for providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript and the data;

a code segment including instructions for obtaining a notary record from the digital notary service of the time stamping;

a code segment including instructions for digitally signing the notary record; and

a code segment including instructions for forming an electronically signed electronic transcript including the digitally signed notary record, file containing the electronic transcript, and the data identifying the user.

20. The computer data signal of claim 19, wherein said file excludes page numbers, line numbers, headers, and footers.

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